



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FracTracker Alliance Discovers Uncontrolled Emissions at 68 Oil Sites Across California

OAKLAND, Calif. – A [new report released by FracTracker Alliance](#) provides new evidence of fugitive emissions from oil infrastructure at 68 separate sites across Los Angeles, Kern and Ventura counties, many of which are located within residential areas.

Using an optical gas imaging (OGI) GF320 FLIR camera, Kyle Ferrar, Western Program Coordinator with [FracTracker Alliance](#), identified uncontrolled emissions — including methane and other volatile organic compounds (VOCs) — that are visually undetectable without the use of highly specialized infrared or thermal imaging cameras. After surveying nearly 400 pieces of infrastructure at 100 separate locations, leaks were identified at 68 sites. Complaints were filed with local Air Quality Management Districts (AQMD) about all emission sources as a result of the findings. The state’s oil regulator, CalGEM, has also been alerted and [issued notices](#) of violation to the operators.

The new report by Ferrar follows recent headlines from AP News that the California agency responsible for regulating greenhouse gas emissions [does not include methane that leaks from idle wells in their inventory of the state’s emissions](#) despite the well-documented risks to public health and other concerning environmental impacts. Additionally, since May, over 40 oil wells were found gushing methane as close as 100 yards from homes in North Bakersfield, highlighting the public safety threats posed by the state’s aging fossil fuel infrastructure.

Key finding from the FracTracker report authored by Kyle Ferrar:

L.A. County

- 41 complaints filed with South Coast Air Quality District for methane leaks detected at idle and active wells, pipes, tanks and combustors.
- Since FracTracker’s last visit in 2019, it appears that newly-installed boilers and combustors are acting as enclosed flares, and many are burning inefficiently with visible

emissions escaping. FracTracker plans to submit a public records request to find out how many combustors have been installed across the county and then request inspections from the air district.

- Many of these leaks are happening directly in communities with homes and other sensitive receptors just feet away. A leak at a Signal Hill site was so egregious and proximate to neighboring apartments that FracTracker immediately called the air district to alert them. That site has already been issued a violation and forced to suspend operation.

Kern County

- 23 complaints filed with San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District for leaks detected at idle wells, active wells, flares, tanks and pipes.
- Many of these sites were within 3,200 feet of homes, businesses, offices and parks.

Ventura County

- 4 complaints filed with Ventura County Air Pollution Control District for leaks detected at a wellhead and other oil infrastructure.

The following statements have been provided in response to the findings:

Bahram Fazeli, Policy Director at Communities for a Better Environment in Wilmington and STAND-L.A. Co-Chair:

“The community has always known that these sites are dangerous to their health and their safety. They’ve known it every time they struggle to breathe, when they feel a headache coming on, when their children have spontaneous nosebleeds. But to see these concerns so clearly in this FLIR footage displays how black-and-white this issue really is: oil drilling does not belong in communities. The footage lays bare that no oil infrastructure – no matter whether it is monitored or not, idle or active – is safe near homes or schools. The City Council and the County are both on the cusp of taking bold action to phase these toxic drilling sites out of our neighborhoods. These dangerous leaks are another signal that City and County officials need to act with urgency.”

Hollin Kretzmann, an attorney at the Center for Biological Diversity’s Climate Law Institute:

“These widespread leaks are the inevitable result of regulators looking the other way for decades. Instead of approving even more of these dangerous oil and gas projects, the governor and CalGEM should focus on forcing oil companies to fix the methane leaks actively harming frontline communities and the climate.”

Cesar Aguirre, organizer with Kern County's Central California Environmental Justice Network:

“Neighborhood drilling is toxic - period. Toxic when it's active and toxic when it's idle. We've always known there's no safe distance from an oil and gas site, and now we have even more undeniable evidence with this FLIR footage. The footage here is yet another reason why California needs to act to pass comprehensive health and safety setbacks immediately and another frightening reminder that Big Oil's infrastructure has no place near our communities.”

[Visit this link to read the full report.](#) For questions or specific data requests related to this analysis, please contact Kyle Ferrar, FracTracker Alliance Western Program Coordinator, at ferrar@fractracker.org.

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